

# HPCA course 'Introduction to Palliative Care for Professionals' is online

Issued by [Association of Palliative Care Centres \(APCC\)](#)

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The Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa (HPCA) has perfected the online version of their course offering - ['Introduction to Palliative Care for Professionals'](#), which was launched in early 2021.



The content has been generated with adult education principles in mind and is relevant for medical officers, registered professional nurses, social workers and allied healthcare workers. The course aims to provide a basic overview of palliative care and to orientate and introduce health care providers to palliative care processes and principles.

Palliative care provides holistic care to patients (and their families) who are diagnosed with a life threatening or life limiting illness, helping them to live their life as fully and comfortably as possible. It encompasses the identification and treatment of symptoms that can be physical, emotional, spiritual or social.

Says Mark Heywood, a South African human rights and social justice activist and co-founding editor of Maverick Citizen: "Palliative care is an integral and essential human right. It is linked to dignity and should be part of the continuum of healthcare and not an optional add on or a luxury for a health system. However, palliative care is still primarily an NGO function that reaches less than 20% of people who need it in South Africa."

Ewa Skowronska, CEO of the HPCA, concurs: "To date, approximately only 18% of patients in need of palliative care are able to access these services," says Skowronska. "There is so much more work needing to be done, in addition to both maintaining and expanding upon the level of palliative care available in South Africa. Our goal with this course is to ensure that those who practice within this sector have access to the information that they need to work with palliative care requirements."

Available in face-to-face format when the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions allow (a five-day interactive with both theoretical and practical components), the e-learning format encompasses a 10-week online interactive experience. The areas covered include overviews of palliative, respite, end of life and hospice care together with the fundamentals and principles of palliative care, identification of patients requiring palliative care, pain and symptom management, caregiver attributes, values and self-awareness and ethics, et al. The course cost is: R5,830.

The training is HPSCA accredited, registered at the University of Cape Town as an attendance short course (NQF Level 7) and endows 30 CPD points (including five ethics CPD points). The nursing participants who attend this course will receive one CPD point for Area of Practice and all delegates who complete the course successfully will be awarded with a certificate of completion.

The course is ongoing, with each training session commencing as soon as a minimum of 10 (maximum of 20) participants are registered. The current course dates available are:

- 30 August – five spaces available
- 13 September
- 27 September - secured by WC-DoH

**October courses will be opened up with sufficient demand received.**

Some of the feedback received from current students is: “The course provided insight both academically and personally by expanding my knowledge into the field of life, death and the dying process,” and “...I want (colleagues) to know about palliative care because in the unit we admit patients who need to be referred for palliative care and although we have palliative facilities, my colleagues are not aware of how this facility functions. In this year, there are a lot of patients who have been diagnosed with palliative related disease.”

“We are committed to growing the reach of palliative care within South Africa,” says Skowronska. “To do so requires advancements and increases in many areas particularly funding. However, another critical component is that of professionally qualified resources who both understand and are able to deliver the life enhancing palliative care so desperately needed by so many diagnosed with life-threatening or life-limiting illnesses. We are excited to offer this course to the many professionals who wish to expand the reach of this vital care nationwide.”

For more information, please contact Ms Amanda Sables on [amanda@hpca.co.za](mailto:amanda@hpca.co.za) or click here to get more detailed information or send an enquiry: <https://hpca.co.za/introduction-to-palliative-care-for-professionals/>.

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Formerly known as the HPCA, the APCC is the new brand (from 1st September 2023). As a registered NPO, APCC is a member organisation for palliative care service providers, many of whom call themselves hospices. Members care for over 100,000 patients and loved ones per year (primarily in the comfort of their own homes). The APCC champions and supports both members and palliative care as a healthcare speciality.

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